

**Meeting Summary**  
**Marketing Your Agency**  
**November 29, 2004**  
**Lyon County Courthouse, Room 3**  
**Marshall**

**Present:**

Pat Thomas – Southwest Adult Basic Education (ABE)  
Denise Myhrberg, MN DEED/Work Force Center (WFC)  
Jim Muchlinski; SW Marketing Advisory Center  
Chelsea Sedlacek – SW MN Private Industry Council  
Carolyn Fransen – MN West Technical & Community College  
Tracy Veglahn – Marshall Area Chamber of Commerce  
Lois Schmidt – Bremer

**Purpose:**

A lunch hour to informally discuss how each of our agencies is involved in promoting or marketing our services to the for-profit sector – to small businesses, to industry, to employers, to economic developers, to others (including consumer publics). Further, to consider advantages and obstacles to marketing to the private sector in a joint, cooperative manner.

Today's agenda was to share info on trainings/meetings/developments that any of the group's participants had been involved in since the last meeting.

Chamber: Tracy

- Project Grow (described in Nov. 10 meeting summary)
- Plans to conduct data-gathering and feedback visits with 25 businesses – Jan. through July 2005.
- Peer-to-peer interviews
- 11 business interviews were completed last year
- Not just Marshall businesses, but any business that impacts the MACC market can be considered for the interview project
- Not about trying to identify businesses that Marshall can lure away from neighboring communities, it's about trying to grow regionally
- Project is not conducive to other agencies joining in the interviews; the dynamic of the interview conversation would likely change if another agency – state, educational, or other – were involved
- Will keep us updated and consider what results of the project are appropriate to share down the road
- Group questions for Chamber included whether the interviews could elicit feedback from the business interviewees on economic development, education and workforce development issues & topics.

DEED/Job Service: Denise

- Recent training for business services position focused on targeting marketing toward businesses and industries to visit with about their needs.

- Looking to be a single point of contact for these business & industries in order to help them make connections useful to their employees and overall company goals.
- The Chamber and DEED may need to coordinate their efforts to prevent duplication of contacts with regional businesses.
- Hoping to enhance agencies' willingness to work together.

MN West: Carolyn:

- Liaison position to work among the tech & community college system, MnSCU, is still in hiring process.
- Goal for this position is to connect with DEED and other agencies in supplying what the colleges need in order to offer education and training responsive to employer needs.
- Companion goal (ultimate) is to increase enrollments/business for the educational institutions involved.

Adult Education: Pat

- Several ABE instructors participated in a statewide in-service training offered recently.
- Focus of training was to help adult education market to the general public and to private sector in their service areas
- Train-the-Trainer concept
- Trainers were not from Minnesota, so one could question authentic understanding of our communities; however materials were useful and will likely be referred to as we move forward.

PIC: Chelsea

- New to PIC – settling in to her focus and position to explore fee-for-service initiatives for the agency.

SMSU Marketing Advisory Center: Jim

- Described a bit about the center's services and approach
- A marketing plan can involve surveys; can involve focus groups; other methods
- Is an effective way to think through/plan for diverse agencies to reach the same people at the same time
- Among considerations: What do our marketing targets want? What won't they respond to?
- The center has several price ranges for services
- Group questions & comments: we're curious about this; may or may not fit our objectives; this lunch dialogue is a process to get clearer on that among ourselves.

Other Discussion:

- Models for business/agency forums – what others do we know about?
- Willmar Quality Council – any other community models?
- Marshall used to have a 'quality council' forum similar to this several years ago

- Society of Human Resource Managers (SHRM) an ongoing group for Marshall area – ebbs & flows as far as businesses & positions represented on a monthly basis
- “Lean Manufacturing” is the business concept now; can also apply to service industries

Devil’s Advocate Question: What are some of the drawbacks to a “one-driver/single-point-of-contact” concept for marketing our various services to the private sector and consumer publics?

- Not good if the “driver” is not knowledgeable and well-informed of all the services
- Driver needs to know who they’re representing and accurately
- At least we shouldn’t be contacting the same people/ businesses (if one-driver concept can’t be realized)
- Situations where businesses don’t necessarily know what they need
- Individuals themselves don’t get an opportunity to establish a relationship with business contacts (lose out on the advantage of people-to-people, i.e. “it’s who you know, is who you trust and work with, pick up the phone to call, etc. ” concept)

Concluding the lunch hour, participants shared their ideas on the possible outcomes of this group by completing the sentence:

“I want this topic to result in.....”

- ... that somehow we’re connected with the contact person who goes out to businesses; that this person is knowledgeable about our services and respects us to deliver the services and products that businesses need. Also that each of our agencies appreciates and respects what each of us brings to the discussion; avoid the barriers that turf protection strategies create... (Pat)
- ....some way that I can provide better access to resources on behalf of my business members....(Tracy)
- .... helping me to understand what’s going on in and around Marshall relating to this topic....(Chelsea)
- ...agree with Tracy; finding out needs of businesses and giving them what they want; not what we want them to have....(Denise)
- ...a plan for all of us to work together; to compliment each agency as much as possible; to build on everything we’ve been successful with in the past....(Jim)
- .... similar to all comments, but mostly *communication*.....! (Carolyn)
- .....a good model of agency/business intermingling and partnership... (Lois)

Suggestion was made to invite SMSU Small Business Development Center (SBDC’s) Liz Struve, and Lyon County Enterprise Development Corp (LCEDC’s) Chris Harris to group. Members volunteered to make these contacts.

Agreed that at our next meeting we will:

- briefly (the adjective is moot! It's a lunch hour and it's *all brief!!!*) discuss and share info/sample materials on any marketing materials our agencies use that the public responds favorably to and/or provides good feedback or results.
- Purpose is to consider how we might be able to use any good materials for a mutual benefit.
- Jim and/or Mike Rich or both will give us a 15- minute presentation on Marketing Advisory Center services that could be relative to our topic here.

**Next lunch meeting:**  
**Wednesday, December 15, 2004**  
**12 noon – 1:00**  
**Lyon County Govt. Center, Room 3**  
**Lunch Provided by Marshall ABE**  
**RSVP to: [pthomas38@hotmail.com](mailto:pthomas38@hotmail.com)**  
Or call 537-7046